

APPLAUDING UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF AMENDMENT TO PREVENT FEDERAL FUNDING FROM GOING TO UNSAFE CHILD CARE CENTERS

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Labor HHS Appropriations Subcommittee for accepting the amendment I introduced with Ranking Member BOBBY SCOTT earlier this week. My amendment would prevent the flow of Child Care Development Block Grants to any child care providers with a record of health and safety violations that have resulted in injury or death at their centers. This amendment was drafted following the tragic death of five-year old Kamden Johnson at an unlicensed daycare center in my home state of Alabama.

For those of you who have not heard his story, Kamden Johnson died this August after being left in a hot daycare van at the preschool he was attending. His body was found later that day dumped at the side of the road.

Kamden's story is heartbreaking. First, because a young life was cut tragically short. Secondly, Kamden's death was preventable. Due to a state exemption for religious affiliated daycare centers, Kamden's daycare center was not subject to state oversight or inspections. As a matter of fact, the driver who was responsible for Kamden when he died had an extensive criminal record.

Despite Kamden's death, and despite the failure of Kamden's daycare center to meet commonsense safety standards, the childcare provider and other unregulated childcare centers like it can be eligible today for federal grant funding. After one of their children was discovered dead by the side of the road, this daycare center can still receive Child Care Development Block Grants.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, safe childcare centers which care for their children and are subject to regular inspection are struggling to make ends meet. Just this year, available slots at Head Start Programs were cut in four counties in my district. Each of the slots cut represent one more child who will not receive an early education, or who may be forced to attend an unlicensed daycare facility that puts their health and safety at risk.

I am a believer that Congress should act to increase funding for Head Start and that funding early learning is one of the best investments we can make in our country's future. But at a time when funding for early learning is limited, it is our responsibility to ensure that federal resources are going to the best possible daycares and preschools.

As of last year, there were 943 daycare centers in Alabama exempt from basic licensing standards. Over 30 Alabama legislators have come together to support a bipartisan bill extending licensing requirements to facilities currently exempt.

Right now, we have an opportunity to ensure that not one more federal dollar goes to a daycare center like the one that Kamden died at. We have a chance for both parties to work together and ensure that federal dollars for early learning are headed to child care

centers that parents can trust meet basic health and safety standards.

My amendment is a commonsense fix following a tragedy that we cannot and should not allow to happen again. Kamden's death this August was not the first child death at an unregulated daycare center in my state, and it will not be the last so long as we continue to fund centers that violate health and safety standards. For our children, for our parents, and for kids like Kamden, I know that we can and must do better.

I am proud that Congress has taken a step in addressing this major oversight in the funding of our nation's day care centers.

There is nothing more important to me than seeing our children learn and grow, and that starts with making sure our resources for early learning are going to the right place.

REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER PATTI

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Christopher Patti, who served as the Chief Counsel for the University of California, Berkeley, and was a well-respected member of the East Bay community. Mr. Patti died as a result of a vehicle accident on August 27th.

Mr. Patti graduated from Dartmouth College in 1980, before receiving his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1983, where he also served as the editor of the Virginia Law Review.

After graduation, he clerked for Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th District, and later embarked on a career in litigation at Heller, Ehrman, White & McAuliffe in San Francisco.

After a few years as a litigation attorney, Mr. Patti changed course and left private practice for public service. In 1990, he joined the University of California (UC) system, working as an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel for the UC Office of the President from 1990 through 2010.

In 2010, he moved from the Office of the President to serve as the Chief Campus Counsel at the University's flagship campus in Berkeley. Since his appointment to this position, he distinguished himself by guiding the campus through very challenging times, and developed a reputation among his peers as someone who "represented the best of Berkeley".

Mr. Patti's commitment to public service and public education, and his career working to support the important mission that the University plays in the East Bay, and worldwide is certainly a testament to that fact.

UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ recalled of Patti that he was "extraordinary . . . and he had a deep core of integrity that motivated everything that he did".

I am grateful for Christopher Patti's service to the UC system, and the Berkeley campus in particular, and to the people of California. As a proud UC Berkeley alumna, I am tremendously saddened by this significant loss to the campus community.

Beyond his many professional accomplishments, Mr. Patti was a loving husband, and fa-

ther who is survived by his wife, Jocelyn Larkin, and two sons, Vincent and Gabriel.

Today, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I salute the life and service of Mr. Christopher Patti. I offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends, and the entire UC Berkeley community who are joined in grief at this incredible, and unfortunate loss.

HONORING ALBERTO GONZALES

HON. DON BACON

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring a dedicated community leader from Nebraska's Second Congressional District with an inspirational story. Alberto "Beto" Gonzales' countless stories of overcoming adversity and selfless contribution to the youth of our Hispanic community, serve as a shining example and model for current and future generations.

Mr. Gonzales grew up in the Hispanic neighborhoods of South Omaha, where his father worked in the thriving meat packing industry. His mother cared for him and his six brothers and sisters and was a positive influence in their lives. As a Christian, she also believed in the power of prayer in daily life. Unfortunately, Alberto fell into drugs, alcohol, and eventually depression and thoughts of suicide.

By the time Beto was 11 years old he was already part of his first street gang and in 1977, spent five days in jail for a knife fight where he was defending himself against several male attackers. Had an observer not testified in his defense, he would have likely spent 30 years or more in jail.

At the age of 23, Alberto met a woman who would become one of his most influential mentors; Sister Joyce Englert with the Chicano Awareness Center in South Omaha. Through her efforts, Beto learned about Christ and was able to get off drugs permanently. His memories of his mother praying for him as a child helped him to make the positive life changes. As a result, Beto committed the rest of his life to helping young people overcome the obstacles and influences of living in poverty, as well as the intense peer pressure from gangs. His commitment was sealed in a tattoo on his arm of the scripture found in Psalms 23:4.

Alberto struggled with academics and barely made it through high school, but Sister Joyce was an instrumental part in helping him overcome a learning disability, teaching him to read and write, and eventually convincing him to enroll at Metro Community College in 1983. He recalls being more scared to pick up a college book than a gun. Though Beto took longer than most to complete his Associates Degree in Chemical Dependency, his perseverance would pay off later in his professional career.

As gang and drug activity exploded in South Omaha in the late '80s and 90s, so did the opportunities for Beto to help endangered youth in that community. While most who work in this field burn out after seven years, Alberto has served in this area for more than 32 years. Beto ran drug and alcohol treatment groups while doing extensive outreach with schools through the Chicano Awareness Center. After that, Alberto served as a National